

64TH CONFERENCE ON EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN


**WORKING TOGETHER
TO ACHIEVE STUDENT SUCCESS**

**Project STEPP
Transition Curriculum**

A Problem of Practice

PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF NORTH CAROLINA
State Board of Education | Department of Public Instruction


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What is Project STEPP?


Supporting Transition and Education through
Planning and Partnerships



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Project STEPP & College STAR

- Project STEPP is one program of the UNC College STAR initiative, a three campus collaborative effort designed to support students with learning differences.
- College STAR is a project of the University of NC System that currently has participation from Appalachian State, East Carolina University, and UNC-Greensboro.


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The Mission of Project STEPP

...is to provide students with learning differences who aspire to achieve a college education and demonstrate the potential for postsecondary success with access and comprehensive support throughout the university experience.


By partnering with these students, their families, and a variety of educational communities, Project STEPP fosters a network of opportunities and resources to empower and support students from admission to graduation from East Carolina University.

Taken directly from the Project STEPP Brochure found at <http://www.ecu.edu/cecd/stamppload/Project-STEPP-Foldover-Brochure-v2012.pdf>.

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Project STEPP

- Collaborative program that partners East Carolina University's College of Education with other colleges and departments on campus, high schools, and community resources

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Project STEPP Offers...

- Comprehensive academic, social, and life-skills support to a select number of students who show the potential to succeed in college

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Project STEPP

- Empowers students with the skills they need to earn degrees in their chosen majors, enjoy a complete college experience as members of a campus community, and achieve in life beyond their years at ECU

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How does Project STEPP work?

- Admissions Process
- Transition from secondary to postsecondary
- Extended Program
- Support Network
- Program Coursework
- Campus Living

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Project STEPP Transition Curriculum

- Eight non-academic modules
- Each module has 2 to 4 fully developed lesson plans with activities
- PowerPoint slides with detailed teacher notes, student worksheets, and handouts with teacher answer keys, guided notes for students, and embedded resources

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Project STEPP Transition Curriculum


- Each lesson plan takes approximately 30 minutes to deliver
- Can be accessed via flash drive provided by Project STEPP or it can be retrieved from <http://www.ecu.edu/cs-acad/stepp/curriculum.cfm>

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Modules and Lesson Plans

Module 1: High School vs. College


- Lesson 1- General Overview
- Lesson 2- Classes & Instructors
- Lesson 3- Studying
- Lesson 4- Grades & Testing

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Modules and Lesson Plans

Module 2: Planning for Academic Success


- Lesson 1- Goal Setting for College
- Lesson 2- Finding and Maintaining an Academic and Social Balance
- Lesson 3- Academic Integrity

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Modules and Lesson Plans

Module 3: Technology


- Lesson 1- Introduction to Technology
- Lesson 2- Postsecondary Technology Tools for Learning
- Lesson 3- Online Learning
- Lesson 4- Using Technology Responsibly

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Modules and Lesson Plans

Module 4: College Readiness


- Lesson 1- Campus Resources
- Lesson 2- The College Community
- Lesson 3- Disability Support
- Lesson 4- Support Services in College

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Modules and Lesson Plans

Module 5: Developing and Maintaining Healthy Routines


- Lesson 1- Personal Wellness
- Lesson 2- Campus Safety

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Modules and Lesson Plans

Module 6: Finances


- Lesson 1- Introduction to College Financial Topics
- Lesson 2- Creating a Budget
- Lesson 3- Using Credit Wisely

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Modules and Lesson Plans

Module 7: Communication


- Lesson 1- Transitioning Between Informal and Formal Communication Styles
- Lesson 2- Classroom Behavior Expectations
- Lesson 3- Sending Emails in College
- Lesson 4- Constructive Criticism

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Modules and Lesson Plans


Module 8: Campus Living

- Lesson 1- Introduction to Campus Living
- Lesson 2- Dimensions of Campus Diversity
- Lesson 3- Living with a Roommate
- Lesson 4- Understanding Conflict Management Styles

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Problem of Practice and Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine teacher and high school student perceived effectiveness of a series of non-cognitive transition curriculum modules developed to prepare high school students with learning differences for a postsecondary educational setting.

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What we wanted to know...

- ❖ How did using the transition curriculum change student perspective on their ability and preparedness to attend college?
- ❖ What impact did the transition curriculum have on teacher perception of students with learning differences transitioning to postsecondary education?

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What we wanted to know...

- ❖ What was the student perception of the quality of the modules?
- ❖ What was the teacher perception of the quality of the modules?

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Why did we want to know?

- Transition planning for students with learning differences has long been discussed and supported by federal mandate
- Shortcomings in the literature supporting or refuting practices that support transitioning of students with high incidence disabilities from secondary to postsecondary settings
- The study would serve to provide a systematic, non-cognitive curricular approach to preparation for students with learning differences

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Significant Research

- **Janiga & Costenbader**
 - The Transition from High School to Postsecondary Education for Students with Learning Disabilities: A Survey of College Service Coordinators (2002)
- **Kortering & Braziel**
 - A Look at High School Programs as Perceived by Youth with Learning Disabilities (2002)
- **Lightner, Kipps-Vaughan, Schulte, & Trice**
 - Reasons University Students with a Learning Disability Wait to Seek Disability Services (2012)

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Overview of Study Implementation

- Implementation in Academic Support classes in two different high schools
- Approximately 26 students and 2 teachers (predetermined sample)
- Research implemented in and supported by Buncombe County Schools

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Overview of Study Implementation

- Mixed Method
 - Pre/Post Test
 - Teacher Lesson Plan Evaluation
 - Student and Teacher Module Evaluation
 - Student and Teacher Interview
- Explanatory Sequential Design
 - Collection of quantitative, then qualitative data to help explain or elaborate on the quantitative results

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Conclusions Based on the Collected Data

- School personnel must show students how to look beyond middle and high school towards postsecondary education
- Postsecondary and secondary educators must network to disseminate information to parents, students, and other educators to realistically form expectations for the rigors of postsecondary experiences

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Conclusions Based on the Collected Data

- Outreach efforts must be strengthened by both secondary and postsecondary educators.
- Parallel of data from this study to the predictors of student drop out in the study by Dunn, Chambers, and Rabren in 2004.
- Students are largely uninvolved in designing Individualized Transition Plans.

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Conclusions Based on the Collected Data

- Disconnect between student and teacher perceptions of student ability.
- Disconnect between student and teacher perceptions of student awareness and teacher awareness of how to prepare for a postsecondary educational setting.

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Conclusions Based on the Collected Data

- Re-culturing and educating secondary personnel is critical in successfully planning for and transitioning students with learning differences to a postsecondary educational setting.

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Limitations to the Study

1. Long standing perceptions of teachers about the ability of students with learning differences to attend a postsecondary educational institution may influence their responses on the pre and post-test instruments and in the interview.
2. Student perception of their ability to attend and be successful at a postsecondary educational institute may be impacted by actions of school personnel throughout their education careers.

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Limitations of the Study

- Implementation was limited to one school district, two schools, and students enrolled in an Academic Support class during the spring of 2014.
- Longitudinal data providing exit outcomes for the participating students was not part of this study.

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Limitations of the Study

- Data collection tools were reviewed, critiqued, revised, and approved by multiple experts, but student and teacher interpretation of each question could not be guaranteed.
- Teacher perception of the ability of students with learning differences to attend a postsecondary educational setting could impact their perception of the quality of the transition modules.

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Implications for Practice

- Educating stakeholders on the intent of the legislation governing transitions for students with learning differences.
- Purposeful planning for transitioning between secondary and postsecondary educational settings.

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Implications for Practice

- Determining actual practices in programming and support of students with learning differences in preparation for the transition from their secondary education.
- Need for continuous professional development and vertical alignment between middle grades and secondary settings, as well as between secondary and postsecondary settings.

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Implications for Practice

- Post study, the researcher discovered that assumptions should not be made with regards to prior knowledge of the students.
- Enlisting a larger sample size would bring results that could be generalized to a larger population.
- Allowing for a full semester for implementation would be optimal.

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Implications for Practice

- Consideration should be made for the structure and culture of the class where the curriculum is being implemented.

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Recommendations

- Collaboration and communication between secondary and postsecondary educators involved in the transition process.
- A longitudinal study from implementation of the curriculum to graduation and postsecondary commitments.

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Recommendations

- Develop a crosswalk between the transition curriculum and the state-adopted curriculum.
- Further exploration of which grade level implementation would provide the most benefit.

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Questions & Comments
